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CHRISTIAN HEALTH AND HEALING FOR ALL

By
THE REV. H. W. WORKMAN

GUILD OF HEALTH
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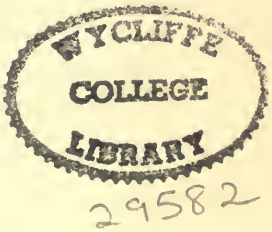
THE REV. H. W. WORKMAN

(*Former Chaplain of the Guild of Health*)



THE GUILD OF HEALTH

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CONTENTS

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOING INTO THE SILENCE FOR PRAYER 3

First step, Self-recollection – second step – third step. Alternative form suitable for Prayer-circles or those who use the Silence, regularly

Chapter I THE SILENCE 6

The use of the Silence – The practical use of the Silence – Introductory I-II. Sunday's Key-note 'Joy' – Monday's Key-note 'The Power of God' – Tuesday's Key-note 'The Presence of God' – Wednesday's Key-note 'Wisdom' – Thursday's Key-note 'Love' – Friday's Key-note 'Discipline' – Saturday's Key-note 'Peace'

Chapter II FOR INTERCESSORS 20

For Intercessors – Silent Prayer – Praying for people we do not know – How to picture Christ – Childlike, not childish – The healing power of joy – Prayer as God's work – God's Instruments – An increasing vision

Chapter III FOR THE SICK 30

For the Sick – What is meant by Spiritual Healing – How we are helped by the prayer of others – Waiting upon God – The Twenty Third Psalm – The Heaven that lies about us – Passing on blessings to others – How to avoid self-centredness – Growing Old parts I, II, III – Facing Death

Chapter IV GENERAL 44

General: How the message is spreading – The love of Jesus – The Healing Christ – The Kingdom of God – Self-adjustment – Resting in God – The discipline of suffering and the discipline of joy – Reality in prayer – Ways of approach to God – Service and Freedom – Life as a pilgrimage

Chapter V SEASONS 57

Seasons: The Christmas message of redemption – The Christmas message of love – Lent, The Transfiguration and Resurrection – Easter, The Resurrection Body – Restoration of Fellowship – The Redemption of the Body

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOING INTO THE SILENCE FOR PRAYER

'Learn to commune with God in the stillness and He whom thou hast sought in stillness will be with thee when thou goest abroad.' — E. B. PUSEY.

FIRST STEP — SELF-RECOLLECTION

You are a Child of God, He is your Father, the Kingdom of God is your Home.

Repeat silently the Family Prayer, sharing its trusting and triumphant note, 'Our Father, etc.'

Now make these affirmations as a conscious expression of what it means to be a Child of God, who is the All-Good, Perfect Love, Wisdom and Power. Your true self is God's thought of you, the perfect self which He means you to work out with Him.

'In Christ Man is one with the Divine Power.'

'In Christ Man is one with the Love which understands and forgives.'

'In Christ Man is one with the Peace that passeth understanding.'

'In Christ Man is one with a base of infinite resources.'

'In Christ Man has power over negative conditions, such as fear, lack of confidence, difficult circumstances.'

'In Christ Man is one with His more abundant life and vitality.'

'In Christ Man is one with His patience, purity, joy, wisdom and contentment.'

'In Christ Man is one with His Spirit of Service.'

Quietly affirm to yourself the virtues which you are most conscious of lacking, but which God means you to have, and which will grow through His indwelling union with you.

SECOND STEP

GATHER up the people and the petitions which you desire to hold in the Silence, first and foremost any whom you have wronged, or who have wronged you; they too are God's children, pray that they may be blessed. Put your personal needs

last, and be on your guard against praying only or mainly for yourself. God's Kingdom is the Kingdom of Love and Service to God and to our fellow men. There is no room in it for selfishness, and no need for it. We are all one.

THIRD STEP

Go out into the Silence, where 'Christ lives, Christ reigns,' where 'God is and where God is working *perfectly*'. Relax yourself, turn away from your active mind, open your whole being to God, realizing Him, not as an intellectual fact, but as all around you and in you, the answer to every need of man.

Be receptive to God for some ten minutes; do not try and think or argue things out; but just as the flower opens itself to and drinks in the light and warmth of the Sun, and becomes its true beautiful self thereby, so open yourself to God, and to your living union with Him in Christ. (See 1 John iv, 7, to end of chap. v.)

Few things help us more to realize God as the Supreme fact of all life, and of our own daily life.

In the Silence feel the whole world vibrating with the presence and power of God, absolute peace and stillness, and yet the intensest and ceaseless energy; the energy of perfect self-control. In the Silence we present our subjects of Prayer to be dealt with by that Presence and Power. They are our seeds, daily we water them in the Silence: they won't grow any quicker because of our energy in watering them. The Power of growth is of God. We can only hold them for Him to work upon, so don't waste time in the Silence emphasizing your petitions, God Himself is the answer to every need of man. He is equal to every emergency, sees the solution of every difficulty or need, and has the wisdom and power to deal with it.

To realize this is to find the poise and quiet strength that are so needed in the stress and rush of daily life.

Close your time of Silence with some words of praise, e.g.

'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory: glory be to Thee, O Lord.'

(*This use of the Silence follows the form of the Service of Holy Communion, and is in fact a Spiritual Communion.*)

ALTERNATIVE FORM

Suitable for Prayer-circles or those who use the Silence regularly

Let us first seek for a clear vision of the perfectness of God Himself. 'The one perfect mind of God behind all human life, Infinite Love, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Harmony and Strength and Goodness. Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom seeing the way through *every* difficulty, working steadily towards it, providing for *every* need: filling man with a true spirit of Fellowship and Service.'

[Add or omit, 'Let us realize our individual share in this great Common Life of God. In Christ Man is one with Divine Power, etc.']

Let us go out into the Silence where Christ lives, Christ reigns, where God is and where God is working perfectly and ceaselessly, and where man is spirit, made in the image of God and capable of expressing His Perfect Life.

CHAPTER I

THE USE OF THE SILENCE

A good many of our Intercessors use 'Suggestions for going into the Silence'; and I hope it may encourage others to join us in this valuable service if I devote a little space to expounding this method of prayer. In some ways it seems a reversal of the petitionary method of prayer in which we all grew up. For one thing it is advisable to sit or lie rather than to kneel when thus praying, because our aim is to forget our bodies, to forget indeed this world and the special ways it is pressing in upon us. It is impossible to forget one's body if one is kneeling for any length of time. We wish to forget this world because we wish to become more fully aware of that far more real and eternal world of which St. Paul tells us we are citizens even during our earth-life. We want to know that world not as shadowy and unreal, but as throbbing with love and life and power and infinitely near; we want to learn to depend on its resources just as simply and naturally as we depend on this world for light and air and food.

It is probable that in this life we are very little conscious of how much we owe to the ordered existence in which we share; we take for granted the many daily services on which our comfort and ease of mind depend, the police, the postman, the daily papers and shops, the buses and trains, the kindly services of our household staff, in fact all that comes to us as subjects of Queen Elizabeth. But we are far less conscious of all that comes daily to us, is open and available for us, as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. That Kingdom is no myth, but a deep reality; it is not a Kingdom racked with discord and disorder as in many an earthly Kingdom, but it is a Kingdom of ordered beauty and strength and of loving service where each in his degree expresses the Master's will, the Master's love and spirit of service. What a difference it makes when first we wake to remember that we are citizens of this Kingdom, going out to face the day in the light of that citizenship, assisted by that comradeship and faithful help, backed by its services and guidance! What a difference it makes at night to fall back on

that citizenship behind all we have done and planned during the day, and to know that behind it has been more than just our own wisdom and power.

It is this deep sense of the reality of this unseen Kingdom of God which I would put as our first lesson in learning our work as Intercessors. To me it all looked so different directly I learned to see as the background of my whole thought of prayer, not just God, but the living, pulsing fact of the Kingdom of God. It is my belief that the power of that Kingdom to help us is to some extent limited by the reality or lack of reality of that Kingdom to us.

THE PRACTICAL USE OF THE SILENCE

INTRODUCTORY I

We all know by experience that it is much easier to take an interest in the principles of the Guild than to live them out in all the myriad circumstances and trials of daily life. But it is the practising members of the Guild who are at once its fruit and its driving force. We shall never revitalize the Christian Churches by mental assent to principles, however beautiful and true, but only by truth demonstrated in the daily walk of life. Of all the ways by which a man seeks to clarify his spiritual vision and to prove by experience the working of spiritual laws, none is surely of more practical value than the use of the Silence. I propose, therefore, to suggest a daily key-note for our thought-life beginning with the Monday key-hote, 'There is no power but of God'.

But first let us remind ourselves of the general aim behind all our use of the Silence. However variously different minds might express this, the main aim would seem to centre on the fact that we are spiritual beings (whose natural home is one where time and space do not exist), living in a world where time and space enter into all our calculations. Our true home expresses the perfectness of the Father's, who is in heaven; His boundless love and goodness; His infinite wisdom and resources; His utter spirit of self-sacrifice and service. Our

earthly home expresses standards which too often are very much lower: the closed-in horizon of time and space has limited our vision in every direction, and by doing so has given us short-sighted ideals and values in life.

The main aim of the Silence must ever be to regain our Paradise Lost, the point of view, the standards and resources that are native to our Father's Heavenly Home. And by so doing we demonstrate that spirit and matter are not necessarily opposites, but that matter, when it is made the vehicle of spirit and of spiritual standards, becomes itself spiritual. In fact it is only so that our Lord's prayer can ever be fulfilled, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in earth as in Heaven'.

INTRODUCTORY II

We sorely need to stress to ourselves the fact that God's standards and values are in very truth the true atmosphere of our lives, because we are His children, made in His image. In this sense the parable of the Prodigal Son is an expression of every life story; like him, we started from the spiritual home with the Father's vision and standard of life; but as the walls of time and space closed us in, we wandered into the far country of the crude, short-sighted standards of earthly life.

The whole story of man's salvation is the turning away from the earthly standards and the slow homeward march, here and hereafter, back to the values and ideals of our Father's Heavenly Home, where He waits with tortured heart and eyes that anxiously scan the horizon, to welcome each child, as of his own freewill he turns his feet back homeward. For He knows that each child that so returns has learnt for ever the true value and eternal beauty of the Father's Home. It belongs to him as never before.

Salvation may thus be viewed as memory, a growing memory of standards, values and resources in life, which have been forgotten or lost, but which, when all is said and done, are our native air. I venture to think that there is deep inspiration and lasting encouragement in this illustration of Salvation as memory. The Kingdom of God is within us; we do not have to go outside to seek for that which is alien, or unnatural, or

supernatural; we have to dig deeper and ever deeper down to the roots of our own being. Ultimately these roots have their foundation in God and the Divine Life, with its values and ideals. It was thus our Lord won through and became for us the Way; and as we seek to set our feet on the same way, the Holy Spirit helps and guides and encourages us step by step. And each step means a further rolling back of the horizon of time and space, and the gradual flooding of our earthly lives with more of the Divine standard and the Divine resources.

Along that path head-knowledge stands for little: it is the heart-knowledge of proved experience that counts. Love, that has been blindly believed in and found true; Freedom, that has been claimed and made good; Resources, believed in beyond human calculation and proved real; Guidance, that came when we were willing to lose our finite wisdom in the infinite wisdom of God; Health, that was let loose in us, when body, soul and spirit were thrown wide open to God and made whole by him.

In this relationship with God in the Silence, there is no need to tell Him all the difficulties and problems that beset me. He knows every detail better than I do, and sees it with bigger vision and deeper understanding. His is the light, the wisdom, the purpose of infinite wisdom and infinite love: I cannot add to that with my explanations; I cannot guide such knowledge with my wisdom nor impose my will on the Great Heart and Mind of God. To beg and implore and beseech is not the prayer of faith but of unbelief: to importune God to change His Will and accept mine is to confess how little God's infinite love and goodness are to me.

Prayer is the expression of my living union with God; and its primary object is to bring me back to that one great Life of the Universe, the 'undefeated' Life of God, as Richard King so beautifully calls it, and to know myself as a tiny branch in living union with that Parent Tree, whose life and strength, wisdom and power, are flowing through me and enabling me to face and overcome the difficulties and problems of the daily path. And what is true for myself is true for every other child of God. Our weakness is that we forget that living union, the deepest and most permanent fact of our being.

Faith is knowing, knowing God as the biggest, the most fundamental and eternally unchangeable fact of our being. And while others may be allowed to be fingerposts to point the way, faith is a path which each must travel step by step himself; alone must he climb the steep places and alone cross the rivers, and alone face the dark places; alone, that is, in the stillness of the heart with God.

Sunday's Key-note: 'Joy'

It is a great pity that the sense of God's pure joy in creation does not play a bigger part in our spiritual consciousness; it would help us over many a difficulty and inspire us with light in many a dark hour. The Bible gives us glimpses of this heavenly joy, when the angels break through into visible contact with this world at the Incarnation. Our Lord is very conscious of it: 'There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just men that need no repentance.' We are so conscious of the heaviness of the road here on earth that it is all too easy for us to be blind to the joy of God and His Heaven, when it should be true for us, too, that the joy of the Lord is our strength. 'Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross.'

God could, of course, have created a race of automatons in a sinless world. His great adventure in creation was the problem of creating children in His own image, who should be like God from deliberate choice and not from necessity. The Spirit of God seems akin to that of Columbus as he set out on his great voyage of discovery, or like that of a scientist immersed heart and soul in the great problem of the cure of cancer. The joy of God is precisely this, that He sees *now* that His adventure is assured of complete success; that He has solved the problem of creating children, who ultimately shall become like Him in love, purity, self-sacrifice, not from necessity but from choice. The difficulties and hardships, the pain and suffering of this life have not been willed by God, but created by man's wrong use of his will-power, individually and still more collectively. But God perseveres in His adventure because ultimately He sees the complete elimination of man-made evil from life. Meanwhile, God is ceaselessly at war with

the evil and suffering of human life; and we are called to fight for Him and with Him in this great campaign. He places each soldier in the right place, knows what he is facing, shares the fighting and suffering with him, and uses the life experience of each warrior to bring him blessing and growth and a share in the great joy of the final victory.

Was there no joy in the hearts of our soldiers in the Great War, when the tide turned and they saw certain victory ahead? Was not that something very different from the just sticking it out of the preceding years? How many Christians today are just grimly sticking it out, year after year, when Christ means them to be fired with the joy of the final victory ringing in their hearts? It would greatly cheer and strengthen us for the difficulties of the coming week if each Sunday, in our Eucharist, we soaked ourselves in this joy of God, this divine certainty that God already foresees the complete success of His plan of Victory. We should go home giants in strength, with renewed confidence in our hearts, and our joy would carry us over difficulties and obstacles that looked impossible before.

Monday's Key-note: 'The Power of God'

'There is no power but of God.' This is a tremendous saying; who of us, as he views the changes and chances of his daily life, dare fully affirm it? I have vivid recollections of sailing in a naval cutter in a heavy wind and sea, at the mercy of a small midshipman in charge of the tiller. I tried to picture our Lord resting in a sense of utter security under such conditions on the Galilean Lake. I could only marvel at Him; but try as I would, I could not follow His example fully. Yet, for us as for Him, it is equally true that man is immortal till his work is done. How far we attain to this truth in daily life at all is largely a matter of how much we steadily set ourselves to know this as a rock truth in the face of all circumstances and all difficulties. If we could remember that heavenly country whence we came out, we should know full well that there is no power there but the Father's. The whole exists to express His Will and be utterly responsive to His power. But away in the far country other forces loom so large; the powers of

evil, pain, disease, poverty and want, fear of unemployment; and in their presence too often the unquestioned power of God and the inexhaustible abundance of the Father's Home slips and fades from our recollection. Slowly and painfully we must retrace our steps and learn to recollect God and His unique power in the face of each difficult circumstance and each human force. Faced steadily with this power of God, we shall see each difficulty and each limitation, in our estimate of them, dissolve as the morning mist before the risen sun. Man's way is to believe this when he sees the fact accomplished; God's way is that we should know it in our hearts first and see our faith justified as the result.

That, then, is one of the greatest uses of the Silence — to urge our memory to recover the true attitude of the Father's Home, and to know that circumstances do not rule God, but that God controls circumstances and uses them. Each child is made in the image of God, and carries every inch of his earthly pilgrimage, his living link with the Father and His power. His Mind fashioned each one, followed each one forth, foresaw and foresees each experience needful for the training and developing of the character He designed. The infinity of God and His love means that He cares for, and intimately knows, guides and protects each of the human family with all the patience and tenderness that earthly parents bestow upon a much-loved only child. The variable factor is our capacity to receive; this depends in part on individual, but also on corporate, wrong attitudes to life. But this is no bar to crystal-clear knowledge that in each problem that faces us there is no power but of God. We know not how that power will work, whether it will be quick or slow in its effect; we only know that that power is love in action, love which faced even the Cross for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Tuesday's Key-note: 'The Presence of God'

Our key-note for Monday was the power of God, 'There is no power but of God'. The key-note for Tuesday is closely allied; the presence of God: 'In Him we live and move and have our being.' By key-note I mean a note by which we can repeatedly test our own thought-life during the day, just as by

striking a note on the piano we can test whether or no we are singing in tune.

'The presence of God': here is a gospel infinitely worth making our own, whatever our circumstances or the state of our health. I have found the simplest way to attempt this is to realize that Heaven is not above the bright, blue sky, but here around us all the time. The object of creation is to bring Heaven to earth, to manifest Heaven in the denser medium of our material world and material bodies. It is our fleshly eyes that alone prevent our knowing this as a commonplace fact of everyday life; we can only know it by faith; but then we are called to walk by faith and not by sight. The whole earthly life of Jesus Christ was a demonstration of living moment by moment in the presence of God; He manifested by His daily living that Heaven was here waiting to be recognized, depended upon and proved. Nothing was too small, nothing was too great, for the presence of God to be actively concerned about it. Think of the Temple Tax, and St. Peter being told he would find the needed coin in the mouth of the first fish he caught. What a little matter! but the Master knew that nothing had been overlooked.

There are two main reasons why we depend so little on the presence of God: the first is that it does not force itself upon our notice. Let us remind ourselves that God always reverences our free-will. His help always comes so naturally that if we so desire we need not attribute it to His presence or His help. But when we begin to realize it, then He does give us wayside sacraments of His presence and His power. Usually these are experiences which mean a great deal to the individual but might mean little to others, who would only see in them a natural explanation.

The other reason is that we are so intent on directing everything with the human mind. To prove the presence of God or of Heaven, we want to direct the forces of both. But we are only the little children of the Heavenly Home, whom the grown-ups love to help. If we come as little children, they will meet our child-like faith; but if we come as the grown-ups of the Heavenly Home, we shall be left to our own wisdom and power or lack of them.

Part of the inheritance of a Child of God is his privilege of being a channel for divine wisdom. This wisdom, as indeed all his inherent gifts as a Child of God, must be sought not outside himself but in the depths of his own being. We need to train ourselves to know it is there, to wait for it, to depend upon it and so more and more to express it in daily life.

Look at a skein of tangled wool: how exasperating can be our efforts to disentangle it! We push and pull, only to find that the tangle becomes more complicated. How often it is thus with the problems of our lives: we tackle them with human wisdom, only to find that every effort seems to involve us in fresh difficulties without solving the original one. Human wisdom sees but some of the details of the problem; divine wisdom sees them all, and can discover the end of the wool, and quietly placing it in our hands unravel our tangle before our eyes.

I remember a man telling me he once had a misunderstanding with his wife: for a long time he tried to straighten it out, but every effort only made matters worse. One night, after praying about it, he went to sleep, seeking an answer to his problem. In the middle of the night he woke up, with the words ringing in his mind. 'Tell your wife that.' He at once woke his wife and did so, and the whole problem was solved.

Here are a few suggestions for developing the use of this divine wisdom within us:

1. Realize it as a part of the All-Father's life within you, a fact which you are meant to recognize as part of your being.

2. Stop arguing about your problem; put all ill-will on one side and daily hold it up to God, quietly asking Him to help you to see it with His eyes, knowing that infinite wisdom sees the way through every problem. Be careful not to limit His answer to this or that line of solution.

3. Wait patiently, wait hopefully; and one day the answer to your problem will flash clearly through your mind, perhaps when you least expect it and when you are not even thinking about it.

Personally I find the hall-mark of this divine wisdom to be that the solution is at once supremely simple, and quite

different from anything of which my human wisdom had thought. In fact I marvel that I had not realized the solution before.

Thursday's Key-note: 'Love'

The special note for Thursday is the golden word Love, perhaps at once the easiest and the most difficult to make use of in the Silence. It is so easy comparatively to believe ourselves loved by God, so terribly difficult to radiate that same love to our fellow-men in the rough-and-tumble of daily life and circumstance. Those are the two obvious sides to the Silence for Wednesday. We are apt to see ourselves through such rose-coloured glasses that the miracle of God's love for each human soul may easily escape us. Our marvel as a rule is how God can possibly love this man or that woman, not how God can love me; that sense of wonder is reserved for the child-like in heart. Let us then start this Silence with an adoring sense of wonder for the love of God, each for his own soul. Reverently we open our inner eyesight, 'the eyes of the heart', to the supreme fact that the Creator of the Universe not merely loves, but is Love. We close our minds and ears for the moment to all the stress and clamour of life, to catch the inner vision of the spiritual world, where Love dwells; Love the mainspring of the clock of the unseen Kingdom of God, telling out with even beat the story of time and eternity. It is Love who has planned the whole, it is Love who has thought out each personality, chosen the time of his earthly life, selected the home, the circumstances where each is to live and serve: the very difficulties and problems of each life are the experience that Love has judged best for the training and growth of that soul. For Love is not sentiment: Love desires the utmost development in each soul, not its sustained ease. Let this vision sink deep down into our own consciousness, so that from the depths of the heart there may rise up a keen answering desire to enter into the spirit of God's plan, and gladly to co-operate with Love's plan each for his own life and development through service.

We have been thinking of the wonder and depth of the

Master's love for each human soul, covering our individual nature, personality and circumstances on every side. Having soaked ourselves first in this fundamental fact, until it fills our consciousness, we can now turn our thoughts to the problems of life and of the days that face us.

Each one knows only too well where the shoe pinches, the things that call for anxiety, for fear, the difficult or unpleasant duties, that lie around or in his path. Surrounded by this protecting wall of Love, let us dare to make ourselves look our problems full in the face. Let us tell ourselves quite frankly, 'there is nothing I am facing in these circumstances but what Love has allowed me to face; nothing breaks through the encircling wall of Love round my life but what Love allows me to face. Love might have given me nothing but ease and comfort; but instead Love has honoured me with calls to service and to growth through service; let me face this service, conscious that Love is facing it with me, and confident that Love can carry through every piece of work and solve every problem'. Such an attitude will send us on our way, not rigid and tense in the face of duty or difficulty, but calm and relaxed, ready to see the hand of Love working miracles, like an oiled feather in the discordant machinery of daily life. The touch of Love is always light and soothing and understanding; and such a preparation for the day will enable us to touch life with a surer hand and a gentler touch.

Let us then adjust ourselves at the centre of our being, before we take up the daily round, the common task. Let us feel the impulse of love animating every atom of our being, love for the Source of all love, and love for our fellow-men. In the hour of impatience or irritation let us say the word 'love' over and over again until we feel it. 'I am the child of love; my spirit always loves. I am here to radiate love. Love is eternal. I feel impatient, but in my inmost self I am loving; my truest self is loving, my conscious self is at the moment wrong' (a friend would say this of us). Truth shall more and more make us free, as we persist in stating this truth to ourselves.

Friday's Key-note: 'Discipline'

The key-note for Friday is discipline of our thought-life even

more than of our bodies. Brother Ass has often had to bear blame which rightly belonged to the thought-life; for he is a good servant of the thought-life if that has been disciplined.

Plotinus expressed a great truth when he defined soul as spirit in the making. The soul is the meeting-place of the spiritual and the material planes of life; the soul decides the colour of the thought-life in its reaction to events; whether that colouring shall be of the earth, earthy, or of heaven, heavenly; whether it shall reflect the short-sighted views natural to a son or the long-sighted views natural to a child of God. We are here to bring heaven to earth; and let us never forget that it is chiefly through disciplined thought-life that we help God in His great desire and purpose for this world, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.'

How are we to discipline our thought-life in the face of our fears, our jealousies, our passions, our egotism, our coldness of heart and readiness to judge? I can only suggest two vital points in the hope that you will think out their application.

The royal road to discipline of our thought-life lies in reflecting: we have to reflect heaven into our problem. We usually want to set our teeth and use our will-power to force us to the desired attitude. The right use of will-power is to keep you reflecting heaven, its attitude, its values, its fellowship, its power, its wisdom, its perfect self-control into your problem. Visualize the attitude of heaven, of Jesus; soak yourself in it; and then quietly, persistently seek to reflect it. The royal key to discipline of our thought-life is that the Kingdom of God is within us: you have not to expand yourself, like the frog in the fable to bursting point, to become your true self. You need to realize that as a child of God, His life as perfect self-control is within you, deep buried, maybe, but there. Look hard at the life of the Heavenly Home as revealed by Jesus Christ; know that its attitude is that of our true self; and so, as you seek to reflect it into your problem, the deeper life within you is stirred: Christ releases it; and thus a miracle of discipline begins gradually to be wrought out in the conscious life.

Saturday's Key-note: 'Peace'

The key-note for Saturday is the Peace of God which passeth

understanding. What a contradiction in terms this is! How can we ever know or understand that which passeth understanding? Yet such a paradox is life, that many of us have known what it is to experience a peace which passeth understanding, to be upheld, possessed by it, in the hour of darkness, when no light, no certainty of a way through, shed its blessed radiance upon the problem that faced and presssed upon us.

Of course the peace which passeth understanding is the peace of the world of Spirit, of God, and has nothing to do with conditions or with our conscious ability or power to deal with them; it is equally obvious that this peace is not the peace of mere harmony and goodwill. If God knows peace in His heart, as He gazes upon the world today, it cannot be because there is nothing in the world today to cause that peace to be broken; and yet we are right to speak and think of the peace of God in the face of, and in spite of, all that makes for despair today.

The point that makes this possible is surely just this; that God has absolute self-control. We know what it is to desire, but to despair of performing; to plan but to fail for lack of confidence or means; to will but to draw back because of circumstances. None of these limitations apply to God; for He is absolutely self-controlled; with Him, to desire is to attain; to plan is to know beyond a peradventure that He can carry through; to will is to perform.

When we come in contact with the world of Spirit, it is to come in touch with life so conceived and so lived — life which controls conditions instead of being controlled by conditions. When we come in contact with God, remember it is equally true that God is coming in contact through us with the world. And through those points of contact God is passing into this world life and power and love, which are not controlled by conditions, but which control conditions and triumph over and overrule conditions. The Cross is the supreme example of this. We see the forces of evil apparently running riot there, malice, hatred, small-mindedness, trust in class and privilege; all apparently clamouring for an answer of even greater force. But God did not meet evil with force; He did not even resist evil. He offered love and self-sacrifice to the uttermost; and that perfect self-control turned apparent defeat into complete

victory. The contrast here is between eternal principles and temporary conditions; the eternal life of the Spirit and the finite powers of the soul.

Let us realize how necessary a part of our equipment is this peace of God which passeth understanding. Let us seek it by learning in the Silence to take our stand on the rock foundation of the eternal principles of God and His spiritual Kingdom in us, rather than on the shifting sands of temporal conditions around us.

CHAPTER II

FOR INTERCESSORS

Silent Prayer

PRAYER is a personal adventure. Some find it more effective to pray one way and some another. Many, it is good to know, are finding Silent Prayer the best method for intercession.

It is wise not to feel tied at all permanently to one particular method of Silent Prayer; and so I venture to put forward the following suggestions, which others may find helpful.

Begin by calling up before your mind a living picture of the Master Himself. We each probably know some picture of Him, which best satisfies the heart as the worthiest conception of His Personality. Or maybe you have formed your own vision of His beloved Face and expression.

Spend some few minutes seeking thus to realize Him, and what you would be most conscious of in His presence, His unutterable love, or His unfathomable knowledge of each human heart and problem, or His infinite patience or His inexhaustible vitality, life, and power. Speak to Him, knowing in truth that as you turn your heart and will to Him, so He draws close to you.

Let His presence flood your consciousness with a deep sense of His will and power to help and heal, Who is the source of all healing, medical, surgical, psycho-therapeutical, no less than the directly spiritual.

It is not your will-power that heals, nor the fervent determination of your petition that is most effective; for the Master cares more than you do, and He seeks to use you, that through you He may reach more effectively to those who need His help.

It is therefore your vision of the Master, your consciousness of His Mind that is vitally important. It is in proportion as your consciousness becomes attuned to His consciousness that He can work through you. We need, therefore, to concentrate on that one thing, and having got that vision as clear as we can in our own hearts, to bring those for whom we are praying to Him, one by one, looking up into His face and quietly repeat-

ing to Him some half-dozen times first one name and then another, in quiet confidence that He is dealng with each as His infinite love and wisdom see best, and by whatever means He sees to be the right one, medical, surgical or purely spiritual. He is Himself the answer to all man's needs.

In this work it is best to use the Christian names, for let us remember they are our *Christian* names, the names by which we are known in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Praying for people we do not know

I was consulted recently about a difficulty which it is likely that all Intercessors experience in greater or less degree, the difficulty of praying for people whom one does not know by sight, who are just a name.

It should be clear that this difficulty is more apparent than real. For the outstanding fact about all intercession work is that one has got beyond the human directing mind and is reaching out to that higher order of knowing, willing and working which is God's and His alone. All medical and psychological treatment centres rightly and naturally on the approach to problems of health through the human intellect and reasoning. In intercession work, we turn our back on human reasoning and human resources, and commit the patient and the problem to the loving care and active working of the All-Father. In doing this we must be careful to look at the problem from God's point of view, and to realize that the value of our intercession work is not measured by our personal knowledge of the sufferer, but by God's intimate and full knowledge.

How, then, can we best co-operate with the mercy of God and overcome this purely human difficulty of praying for what is to us just a name? I hope what I have already said has put the problem in a different light; but beyond that I could also mention what I personally find the best way of dealing with this problem.

In thinking during intercession work of a patient, who is nothing more than a name to me, I seek to visualize to myself the child of God which is the deepest fact in the sufferer's make-up, the perfect being whom God created. So I do not visualize a being cramped with arthritis or convulsed with

pain, all of which is linked with the sufferer's physical body or physical mind. I seek to visualize a being, perfect in his freedom to move, with every organ perfect and perfectly co-ordinated, and then in the silence I see that being transfigured with the divine life within. And so I offer God the vision of what He has created, of what our Lord has redeemed in soul and body, and of what the Holy Spirit is actively engaged in recreating through our Lord's redeeming love and power.

I admit I find it easier to pray for those whom I know at least by sight; but I am very conscious that this is really a natural but very human failing on my part.

How to picture Christ

How do you think of Jesus Christ when you pray to Him for those who are sick? Here are two pictures which I hope you may find supplementary rather than contradictory. The first was given by a former Dean of Canterbury on the wireless, when he first spoke after a long absence through ill-health. He said he had been trying to rethink Jesus Christ. He pictured himself as being lost on a dark night. He was trying to make his way up a steep place by the sea, overgrown with grass and bushes: it was raining and blowing. And in the darkness he saw a wooden hut some way ahead: a light was showing in the window, and weary and exhausted he made his way to it and knocked on the door. And the door was opened by the Master Himself, who welcomed him in, and making him warm by the fire, made him tell Him all his difficulties and troubles. And soon he forgot all his burdens in the wonder of the Master's smile and great sympathy and confidence. It is a delightfully simple picture, making us realize the Master's deep humanity and power to win our trust and lift the burdens from our shoulders. Side by side with that picture, visualize another. Your spiritual eyes are opened and you see that even here on earth you are actually in the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ is there in all His Resurrection wonder and beauty: the Kingdom of the Angels and Holy Saints is all around him. It is a real kingdom: there is constant coming and going. The Master has time for each need. Gradually you realize that the kingdom extends into this world, as far as man will let it. Angels and

holy ones are being sent to help the sick here, to comfort the sorrowful there, to strengthen the poor or the tempted, to devise means of helping some with great financial problems. Everywhere you see the peace of quiet assurance, the sure confidence the real need has been understood and the right solution found. This kingdom is not simply the echo of our prayers, but a great kingdom ceaselessly and perfectly at work, actively ruling and overruling the problems of earth corporate and individual, as they are brought within its scope and power.

Some wait around Him, ready still
To sing His praise or do His Will;
And some, when He commands them, go
To guard His servants here below.

If we soak ourselves in the atmosphere of these two pictures we shall find the sense of strain, the useless part of human will-power and grim determination dying out of our intercessions, and the great confidence of real faith taking their place. It is this great confidence which is an essential part of power in prayer.

Childlike, not Childish

As intercessors, one of our greatest needs is to be childlike and to avoid being childish. The childish man is one who persists in thinking and behaving as a child when he has ceased to be a child. The interests, aims and ambitions which are natural to a child are not natural in a grown man. We expect him then to shoulder a man's responsibilities, to put before him a man's ambitions, a man's joy and to seek satisfaction in the exercise of his powers.

We should certainly be right in seeing that the outgrowing of the childhood stage includes the mental development which adds to our faith knowledge. We are, as the Guild has always taught, called to serve God with our minds no less than with our hearts, and to persist in our search for a reasoned belief which satisfies heart and head alike. The spiritually full-grown man is one who has tested his faith until increasingly he has come to know Him in Whom he has believed.

The main childlike qualities are simplicity, humility and a natural reverence. A child loves to play at being grown-up;

but he knows full well that he is not grown-up. He lives a real life of his own in a real but limited world of his own, beyond which he knows there lies a bigger world, which intrigues him. It is his instinctive desire to play a full part later on in this bigger world which gives him his attitude of natural humility and reverence towards it. Cannot we all remember how simple life looked when we were young? We thought simply about serving a living Jesus, about right and wrong: we saw our way so simply through the problems of life. It was God's world; and His Kingdom must triumph, and His resources were behind His servants.

And then in so many cases, as we grew up, our growing experience of God did not keep pace with our growing knowledge of the problems and difficulties of human nature and of life; and we became muddled both about life and about God.

The childlike person has not shut his eyes to the complexity of life's problems, but he has preserved or acquired, simplicity, humility and a natural reverence towards Jesus and His spiritual Kingdom. This preserving does not mean just using cant phrases. His understanding has inevitably developed; but with it there persists the same simplicity of approach: he still knows full well that beyond his manhood's world there lies the bigger world of Christ and His Kingdom, which calls for his humility and natural reverence. And in giving these, he has found again and again that he is touching reality, that he is serving a risen and living Jesus, that his spiritual Kingdom is a reality and that its help and resources are in effective touch with earthly life and human need.

Let us all seek for this simplicity of approach in our intercession work for the Master, while we remember that such simplicity is compatible with great intellect, and indeed has been the outstanding feature of some of our intellectual giants.

The healing power of joy

In our work of ministering to the sick, we cannot be certain, any more than can a doctor, of bringing healing; but we should be certain of bringing joy to the sufferer. And joy is often the gateway to health. 'The fruit of the Spirit is joy.' That is a truth that is often forgotten, to our great loss. A missionary at

a large London Mission, gazing from the platform at the solemn worried faces before him, remarked to a friend, 'They do not seem to have found much!' Why is it that so very many Christians have totally overlooked what R. L. Stevenson called 'the great task of happiness'? We are apt to think that joy depends upon and is at the mercy of the changes and chances of this mortal life. It is not: true joy springs from a true relationship with God. It is strange, but as I look back over the past fifty years with all its many-hued events, the high water mark of joy goes not to the times of success or achievement, but to the time when as a boy I lay on a bed of sickness, and the doctors were uncertain whether I should recover or die or spend my life on my back. I have always longed to reach again the fullness of joy that came to me in consciously facing the unknown in that problem. Its whole secret was that in that problem I had been driven to the point where everything depended upon God and His plan and purpose for my life. I came to face with the Good Shepherd, and I learnt to lose my will entirely in Him and in His good and perfect will for me. He was going a step ahead through that problem; He had me in His keeping; the outcome was not to be a matter of chance or luck but what He chose; and He would choose what in the deepest truth would be the right solution. And confidence in Him deepened love for Him; and love for Him led on to joy — deep, full, overflowing joy that whatever happened all was well; and in an almost impersonal way I could watch His daily dealing with my body. Such an attitude throws the patient wide open to all the spiritual help and healing power of the Divine Physician, and turns the most trying experience into a glorious and inspiring memory.

It is a quest each must make for himself; I can only say that I know the goal is sure and certain and that is how I found it.

And let us all face the fact that joy is a Christian duty as well as a fruit of the Spirit. It has been written of St. Francis of Assisi — 'The blessed Francis ever made it his highest and chief study, apart from prayer and the divine office, to have continuously spiritual joy, both outwardly and inwardly; and this likewise he particularly loved in his brothers, often rebuking them for sadness and for showing their grief.'

Prayer as God's work

It has been well said that the most valuable things in life are the simple things that are within the reach of us all: air, sunshine, water, friendship and prayer. When we get beyond this life, I often think that one of the greatest surprises to us will be our realization of the value and power of prayer and our consequent grief that we made so little of it. Here we are working on the wrong side of the tapestry, when it is hard to see the pattern; but there we shall be working on the right side, and the pattern of God's will and plan will be clear to our eyes. But even here on earth it is clear that God has so knit us together in one family that we are able to help each other by prayer.

I expect we all know these lines:

> The weary ones had rest, the sad had joy
> That day, and wondered 'how?'
> A ploughman, singing at his work, had prayed
> 'Lord, help them now'.
> Away in foreign lands they wondered 'how?'
> Their simple word had power.
> At home, the Christians two or three had met
> To pray an hour!
> Yes, we are always wondering, wondering 'how?'
> Because we do not see
> Some one, unknown perhaps, and far away
> On bended knee.

Our intercession work is but a special example of this great principle of prayer. It does not mean that we value less all that men have slowly learnt about treatment of sickness; but it comes behind and works through all that the human mind or hand can do; or God may work, as He sometimes does, directly through our prayers.

Prayer has been described as a method which God has planned for getting His will done on earth. And His will is expressed not in putting sickness and disease upon us but in helping us to overcome them and find a way through them.

There is one point which is specially valuable in our intercession work and which distinguishes it from other similar

work. It is that Jesus Christ has redeemed the body no less than the soul. When we let that fact really sink into the depths of our own consciousness, then we find it as easy and natural to pray over problems of the body as of the soul; for both body and soul are parts of the same whole which Christ has redeemed. Praying does not mean begging God to do this or that, but quietly resting on the fact that God Himself is already at work in the heart of the problem. The offering of that vision of faith seems to open an added door through which our Lord can more effectively work.

God's Instruments

One of the great lessons that sooner or later we all find we have to learn in the work of intercession is that we are not directing the forces of the Kingdom of God nor are we seeking to guide His will, His wisdom, or His power, but that we are the little children of the Father's great Family, who are seeking to offer ourselves to Him as instruments or channels which He may be able to use to effect His will and purpose.

I find it helpful to carry in my own mind a simple illustration which teaches the same lesson from a somewhat different angle. I call it the Fives Court Wall view of God. In a Fives Court the back wall is a plain smooth surface, and its special function is to return the ball with an accuracy that can be relied upon absolutely. So much is this so, that the whole skill of the game lies in placing the ball so that it shall be returned in a position that makes it hard for your opponent to reach or take it. Do not many of us go through a stage in our intercession work when we are apt to think that the whole art and power of prayer depends upon the accuracy and skill with which we place our prayers, that the answer to our prayers will come back off the back wall with an effectiveness which will be proportional to our skill in making our petitions? That is what I mean by a Fives Court Wall view of God. For in so thinking we have reduced Him to nothing more than the accurate responder to our petitions. Fives would become an impossible game if the back wall took an intelligent part in the game, and instead of returning your ball with an accuracy which could be relied upon, returned your ball with greater skill and insight

than that with which you made the stroke. But that is what actually happens in prayer. God takes our prayers and answers them with infinitely greater wisdom and insight than that with which we made them. The illustration may seem so simple as to be childish, and yet it may be that we need to make it our own; for the study of philosophy, psychology or mental science may, in my opinion, tend, probably quite unconsciously and certainly quite wrongly, towards a development of such a limited view of God.

An increasing vision

There are two sides to our work of helping the sick. We have to help them to help themselves; for God requires us to do our part in all problems of life and health. There is a danger of our concentrating so much on man's side that we just take all the wonder of God's side for granted.

Let us think once more about God's side in the work of Divine Healing. How easily we assume when we speak of God that we all understand and mean the same thing; yet in actual fact we probably none of us are visualizing alike. Here is one whose vision of God means seeing everything in life as black or white; to him the word God means little more than the moral law or God as the super-policeman who enforces it. Here is another who conceives of God as Mind, and who, in this way at least, has learnt to think of God as immanent in His creation and upholding not only man but beast and stone alike. Here is another who has seen how wonderfully our Lord's sacramental teaching fits into this conception — His teaching about the Vine and the Branches. He is giver of more abundant life in the same way that the Father is the Upholder and Indweller of His creation. Here is another who sees all this and yet feels that it leaves him with the sense that the Unseen World is a desert with God alone in it; and so, though he believes that God is love, he does not feel very much drawn towards God and the Unseen World. But here is another who has come to realize the Unseen World as the Heavenly City, throbbing with life and redeemed humanity. God is the Light thereof and Jesus Christ is the Temple; and the whole radiates Christ's spirit of love and service, and is responsive perfectly

to the will and wisdom of the Father. And yet here is another, who sees that City as the real Kingdom of God which is interpenetrating this life, helping forward God's work here on earth, and is in effective touch with human life, as the Bible shows us again and again in those inspiring stories of the services of God's Angels to mankind.

We make but poor use of life, if our vision and understanding of Christ and His ability to help us do not grow and develop as we seek to serve Him. Perhaps I have said enough to make it clear that God is not like the back wall of a Fives Court, just responding mechanically to our prayers as the wall mechanically returns the ball. Rather our vision of God is something that should always be growing in effectiveness and developing in detail, and this growth will bring with it greater power in prayer and a deeper sense of God's ability and willingness to give more than we ask or think. It will not make us slack about man's share in the work of Divine Healing; but we shall also be in no danger of looking upon God's part as a mere mechanical extra to what we are doing.

CHAPTER III

FOR THE SICK

What is meant by Spiritual Healing

I WANT to try to help those who are seeking for help in sickness without previous knowledge or experience of spiritual healing.

For such people there are two points on which they need to be clear in their own minds. Are they merely seeking healing of the body or of the whole personality? and what is their vision of God? how do they really think of God?

To seek merely for bodily relief is to turn spiritual healing into nothing more than a magic wand, and is likely to lead to disappointment. Healing of the body is really a by-product of the healing of the whole personality. This is the outcome of a new adjustment to God; such an adjustment may lead to a new and joyful sense of one's utter dependence upon God, or to a new sense of our need of His forgiveness and a joyful acceptance of His forgiveness — experiences which restore to us a deep sense of fellowship with God and happy dependence upon Him.

It may come from realizing wrong attitudes to God and to life in ourselves, attitudes which we had not been conscious of as wrong before, but which we now see must be changed: by the grace of God we set our faces to make that change a fact in our daily lives. Such attitudes are often fear, worry, an unforgiving spirit, pride, selfishness, a rigid attitude to life and to people. Such attitudes may be the cause of illness, and may hinder God's healing power until they are changed.

I have often emphasized the vital importance of the vision of God which we carry in our hearts. We constantly have to seek to see God through the eyes of Jesus Christ. And such effort will bring to us a sense of happy dependence upon God — the sure knowledge that He is not one power among many, but that He is effective in all the problems of life; that we need not to win Him to do our will, but to lose ourselves in His good and perfect will; and so we come to know that the outcome of our particular problem is not a matter of chance. We can rest in God and watch Him work out the right solution. To any

beginner I would say soak your heart and mind in Psalm 23. No passage in the Bible will teach you more simply about your right attitude to God and His power to care for you and to meet your needs of soul and body. And don't be in a hurry. Seek and ye shall find.

How we are helped by the prayers of others

I expect that most of those who are sick and who happen to read this are being remembered by some prayer circle. I hope you value that privilege, not merely thinking of it as human sympathy. I am passing on to you an incident which may bring to some a deeper sense of the value of the work done by intercessors. A lady with tubercular trouble had been sent to Switzerland, where she lived for some months. One day another patient said to her, 'I wonder if you would mind telling me what happens to you on Tuesday afternoon'. I think he suspected that she was given some special treatment that he did not know about. 'You see,' he went on, 'I have watched you and noticed that though you may not look well on Tuesday mornings, by teatime you look altogether different: there is more colour in your cheeks and a new look of health about you. I hope you will forgive me for asking you about it.' The lady said she did not mind at all, and then went on to say that nothing particular happened to her on Tuesday afternoons, except that that was the time the prayer circle, who were remembering her, met at home. The other patient was deeply interested, and ended by asking if his name might be added to the list of that prayer circle, which was readily agreed to. Both these cases made a good recovery, and were able to return to England and take up their lives again. But what a splendid tribute to the value of prayer that the difference it made was noticeable in this way to someone who knew nothing of the cause! In prayer there are no barriers of time or space. The Master takes the five loaves and two small fishes of the intercessors and uses them to work effectively in dealing with the needs of those who may be hundreds or thousands of miles away. I hope this message will bring encouragement to many engaged in intercession work; be faithful in your service of prayer; and when you pass on you will be allowed to know all that Christ has been able to do through your prayers, and you

will indeed enter into the joy of your Lord. I hope too that many who are sick will find in this event a new vision of the value of the prayers of those who so kindly hold them up in prayer. If you value those prayers, you will gladly co-operate by being receptive in the Silence at the daily or weekly times the intercessors meet to pray for you. You can also help them by making regular reports of your progress; for intercessors would not be human if they were not sensitive to any lack of such reports. It is so hard to go on praying and not to know what is happening: it must seem as if the sick person did not value prayer very much. Lastly, when you are better do not forget to say thank you to the Divine Healer and to those who, through the ministry of prayer, have helped Him to do His work of healing in you.

Waiting upon God

'Wait still upon God; open your heart to Him, let the light and warmth of His love flood your mind and heart and soul. As the flower opens itself to and drinks in the light and warmth of the sun and becomes its beautiful self thereby, so rest in the conscious thought of your living union with Him in Christ.'

'In the silence feel the whole world vibrating with the presence and power of God, absolute peace and ceaseless energy; the energy of perfect self-control. In the Silence we present our subjects of prayer to be dealt with by that Presence and Power. They are our seeds, they won't grow any quicker because of our energy in watering them. The power of growth is of God. We can only hold them for Him to work upon; so don't waste time in the Silence emphasizing your petitions: God Himself is the answer to every need of man. He is equal to every emergency, sees the solution of every difficulty or need and has the wisdom and power to deal with it. To realize this is to find the poise and quiet strength that are so needed in the stress and rush of daily life.'

'Man has few greater needs than simple-mindedness and single-mindedness. It is a great joy and refreshment to relax oneself and be still, and then quietly to realize what life is. God is Spirit and I am spirit, made in the image of my Father, dwelling for a time in a human body, but here and for all time

joined to God, linked to His life and love, upheld by the Everlasting Arms which can never fail nor be overcome. And I am there to give myself gladly and with full rest and confidence in love and service to the world around.'

The twenty-third Psalm

The twenty-third Psalm is a mine of blessing for those who are facing problems of health. If you have not already realized that the Psalm is describing a journey, do read it again and see how greatly that fact adds to the richness of the Psalm. In Palestine, where water and grass are scarce and uncertain, the shepherd takes his flock on a pilgrimage as soon as winter is over until late in the autumn. The central thought of the Psalm is that only the shepherd knows the way, and the sheep individually and collectively know that their safety and food depend on keeping close to the shepherd. In the early spring there are the green pastures and the waters of comfort. But it is a different story as the heat of summer withers the grass and dries up the water.

The supreme test comes in the valley of the shadow of death, which was the name given to the terrible road that leads from Jericho by the Dead Sea, far below sea level, to Jerusalem some thousands of feet above it. Here the road runs due north; it is steep and dangerous from wolves and robbers; there is no grass, no water and no shade; and the sun beats down mercilessly on the heads and backs of the sheep as they climb the rough way, cutting themselves on stones and tearing their coats on the hard long thorns of the scrub. How often there must rise the thought, 'I cannot bear this; I cannot go on; it is all wrong. Why do I have to go this terrible journey?' Instinctively the sheep know that to drop out means certain death; and the one thing that keeps them going is the sight of the shepherd, as he plods slowly in front. He knows the why and the wherefore of that hard journey; and trust in the shepherd keeps the sheep persevering until that cruel climb is finished. Then come the times of refreshing, when the shepherd supplies the water and the food, and goes over each sheep anointing with oil the cuts and wounds.

The Psalm ends with one of the most beautiful pictures of

death: the shepherd at long last leads his flock back into the homestead for the winter, there to be with him in security and shelter.

I love to think of our Lord, as a little boy, learning that Psalm at His mother's knee. If it appeals so surely to our hearts, how must He have loved and revelled in its spiritual truth and beauty, until at last He makes it uniquely His own as He proclaims 'I am the Good Shepherd!'

The valley of the shadow of death stands for those dark and difficult times that in one way or another we all have to face in life. Let us make the lesson of the Psalm our own personal experience: let us learn to say truly, each for himself, 'The Lord is *my* Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.' It is precisely when life is most difficult that I most need to know and rest in the fact that the Lord is my Shepherd, that He is going on just ahead, that He knows the way, that the outcome will be no matter of chance. As we draw close to Him confidence is revived; we can still go on a day at a time; we may even come to stand on one side, and with joy and peace in our hearts watch almost impersonally how He will deal with our problems.

And how lovely to think of the end of that long pilgrimage, when we come face to face with the Good Shepherd and know we are to dwell under His love and protection for ever.

The Heaven that lies about us

Here is a valuable little prayer, which I hope others will find as full of inspiration and meaning as I do.

'We pray Thee, O God, that Thou wilt open our eyes to behold the heaven that lies about us; wherein they walk who, being born to the new life, serve Thee with clearer vision and greater joy; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.'

That prayer suggests to me what should be the outcome of all faith and Christian daily life. Let me underline one or two points which are well worth our using for meditation, and which should help us to find the rock we need under our feet in all times of crisis, whether personal or national.

'The heaven that lies about us.' The kingdom of God is not far off, or out of touch with this life. It is within and behind the world of matter. It is true that our fleshly eyes cannot see

it; but neither can we see the ether or the ether waves that our wireless brings right into our homes, even when the doors and windows are shut.

'Wherein they walk.' You cannot explain the working of your wireless set; but you have accustomed yourself to it, so that you use it with confidence, and you depend upon it. The Kingdom of God, like the ether, has always been there; and in the Silence we can tune in to it, and gradually we should come to depend upon it and use it in our daily life. If you ask me how we can tune in, I would say our first need is to *know* that the Kingdom is there, and that we are not trying to create an imaginary Kingdom of God by our thoughts. If you seek God in His Kingdom, be very sure God is seeking you and will find you.

'Being born to the new life.' We cannot cause ourselves to be born spiritually any more than we can physically. We are as dependent upon God for the one as we are on our parents for the other; but that spiritual birth is already ours in our baptism. It is for us to claim and rest upon what God has done in us.

'Clearer vision and greater joy.' How we long for it in these anxious times, no less than in the personal crises of life! We are apt to think it comes from being grim and determined: we shall in actual fact find it far more effectively by relaxing ourselves and resting in the wonderful fellowship and help that is ours in the heaven that lies about us.

Spend a few minutes daily in that heaven; rejoice in its fellowship; and you will find increasingly that you are facing the rest of the day in a new spirit of peace and quiet confidence.

Passing on blessings to others

I wonder if we impress sufficiently on those who come to us for help or who ask our prayers the great value of passing on blessing to others. It is a great and fundamental law of Christ's Kingdom that we are channels to receive and pass on divine life and blessing and not merely barrels to catch them for ourselves. Just as no cell of the human body can live to itself, but must share in and pass on the life that dwells in and flows through the body as a whole, so in Christ's body of the faithful

His more abundant healing life flows through rather than dwells in each cell.

We see this great truth brought out by our Lord in the Gospels: having received forgiveness, the Christian *must* show forgiveness. It would be hard to find a more forcible parable than the one our Lord gave of the servant who owed his king ten million pounds and was forgiven, but who refused to forgive a fellow servant a debt of ten pounds. Let us never forget the contrast between the debt which we owe to God and which He is willing freely and frankly to forgive, and the debts owed us by others, which we find it extremely hard to forgive. The parable drives us into a corner, and forces us to see that we cannot have the blessing of God's forgiveness unless we are willing to pass on that blessing of forgiveness ourselves to others. We must be channels, not water butts.

So, too, with love, the love which understands and seeks to serve; so, too, with the spirit of service. It is highly probable that failure to realize and obey this law is responsible for many cases where patients seem to make little or no progress.

I would urge all who ask our prayers to think of some others who need their prayers. There is no surer way of bringing spiritual help and healing to ourselves than by caring deeply for, praying confidently and persistently for others in need, for God answers our prayers through us, and the healing that flows to others through our prayers, flows first of all through us ourselves and leaves a blessing behind it.

How to avoid self-centredness

I was once asked about a case, not in connection with the Guild, in which a patient, an advanced consumptive, had regained a wonderful measure of health through spiritual means. But alas! she had escaped the Charybdis of physical ill-health only to fall into the Scylla of a completely selfish, self-centred life. She makes her home miserable; she worships her own body and spends every penny she can on cosmetics, though she has a widowed mother and is entirely dependent on charity. What a pitiful tragedy her life has become! This is, of course, an extreme case, but her problem is one about which every sick person has to be on his guard. Sickness can so easily become an

excuse for selfishness and self-centredness; Charles Kingsley was right when he said that we never need more to seek to be truly unselfish and think of others than when we are ill and the end of earthly life is in sight. And this is true of all illness; it may often be a necessary step towards recovering health that we should prove our restfulness in God's care for us, by deliberately thinking for others and planning to meet their needs.

I often think of a case that a doctor once told me about. She was a lady of large means; she spent her life in bed and lived the life of an invalid. It took some eight people to serve her house and to attend to her every need. Her doctor visited her each week. After doing so for twelve years, he said to her one day that he had been visiting her for a long time and had done everything he could think of to make her well and able to lead a normal life. He added that he had thought of one other prescription, which he had written down for her and would leave with her. And if that did not meet her need, he thought she had better try a change of doctors. When he had gone, she opened his prescription and read these words: 'Do something for somebody.'

The words went home, and in a very short time her nurses were dispensed with, and she was leading a normal life; and ultimately she became one of the greatest benefactors and keenest social workers in the large town where she lived.

A self-centred life is not a happy life, nor is it a healthy attitude towards God or man: service is the rent we all pay for living in this world. If we can do nothing else, we can remember in prayer the needs of others, even before our own. The sick beds of England might well become the power-houses for every kind of work that is being done for the Kingdom of God. We have a wide choice; and such beds of suffering may become havens of peace and refreshment to many who carry inspiration away from them to meet their daily struggles and sacrifices.

Growing old — I

An old friend of 80, asks me to write a message for those who are facing old age, and I gladly do my best to respond. This is a very special problem, if you come to think about it, for

it is an experience that Christ Himself did not face. But there can surely be little doubt as to His guidance in facing this experience. He would tell us to remember that we are still God's *children*, that we may still look up into our Heavenly Father's face with utter trust and confidence, glorying in our dependence upon Him, knowing that His Love is the same, yesterday, today and for ever, and that as our bodily strength and power to do things lessen, so are we freer to serve Christ and His Kingdom by our prayer and by our self-forgetting thought and love for those around us, who are in the thick of facing life and all its stress and strain. It was Charles Kingsley who reminded us that we never need to exercise self-forgetfulness more than as we come near the end of our pilgrimage. If we still keep our faith in God and our interest in life and people, we shall have much to give to others in our knowledge of life and in our experience of God's mercies, something that younger people may well long to learn the secret of obtaining. No: old age should not mean an end of but a change in Christian service.

I always like the advice that one old servant of Christ gave, that one of the secrets of growing old happily is to learn to laugh at the increasing limitations that old age brings in one form or another. This should not be a counsel of perfection for the Christian, for he knows that the best is not behind him but is yet to be. The time may have come for him to be one who also serves by standing and waiting — ready out of a long experience of God's mercies to witness to others of His readiness to help in time of need and of His mercies which are new every morning. I imagine old age is a time when one spends much time thinking over the past, digesting bit by bit the whole story of one's life. For the Christian this should very definitely mean, not a sighing over vanished joys or a dwelling on past mistakes, so called, but an ever deeper realization of the wonderful way in which his life has been touched again and again by the overshadowing mercy of God. We need to fill old age with thanksgiving; and that will cheer and strengthen our hearts at a time, when we feel both joy and sorrow less keenly, to await quietly the Master's call, the call which means the covering up of the window that faces earthly life and the uncovering of the window

that looks out upon life in a more beautiful world, while we shall see this life and its lessons more clearly and find a warm welcome home. Oh, if we could only realize the fellowship of love by which we are even now surrounded!

Growing old — 11

I want to continue my message for those who are facing old age. In my village there are an unusual number of old people; and daily I offer a simple prayer for them, one by one, that they may be given a foretaste of the wonderful love and fellowship by which they are even now surrounded. Again and again in the houses of the humble I have been told of some such experience; and I am always thrilled; for to those who have been given such a foretaste, old age has no terrors. I would suggest that the old should bear that possibility in mind, and should in their times of Silent Prayer open their hearts to the living fact of that fellowship, here and now.

A book which should help the old is *Pilgrim's Progress*. Read carefully the part about Christian as he draws near the river and can dimly see the outline of the Celestial City to which he is travelling. He calls it the land of Beulah, and the angels of God walk there; and when he asks them about crossing the river, he is told you will find it shallower or deeper as you believe in the Lord of that place.

It was for him a time of waiting and of preparation for the Call that he knew was coming; and it was not a time of unalloyed peace or joy. He tells how he was troubled with hobgoblins; and that is an experience that is apt to trouble Christians today in the weakness of old age. It is not for them visible hobgoblins, but unreasoning fears, unwelcome and troubling thoughts, which may be very tiresome and may even suggest to them that they have lost touch with their Saviour. The real explanation is that old age means a physical weakening of our powers of self-control and thought-control; and the subconscious mind gets above itself. As I understand the human make-up, the subconscious mind has a double function; it is the storehouse of all our earthly experience, both remembered and forgotten; and it is also our link with the world soul of our whole fallen race; and as self-control weakens in old age, this

may bring us trials and evil thoughts, which we know are no part of our attitude to life. Know these for what they are; tell them in the Name of Christ to go; and then set yourself not to worry. We see not all things yet put under Jesus; but He has won the battle; He has redeemed the world. He will carry through your salvation to its full perfection; that work has only begun here on earth. Be patient and trustful; and for your encouragement read on to the end of Christian's pilgrimage; his fears go and he passes the river in peace; and what a glorious welcome awaited him!

Growing old — 111

The problem of growing old affects us all sooner or later. At our healing services the majority of those seeking the laying-on of hands are people with very grey or white hair, who are approaching the sere and yellow leaf in life. Perhaps they may welcome a message to themselves. Here is a simple illustration from the running track.

I was well known as a runner in days gone by, an amateur champion and the winner of a number of international races. In running a long race one has to go as many as nine or twelve times round the track. It is a long and exhausting experience, no less than is life itself. And then when one comes to the last time round, a bell rings to let you know you have reached the last lap. How welcome is that sound! and everyone thinks of the end drawing nearer and seeks to lengthen his stride. And then the great moment arrives as one turns into the home straight and sees the finishing tape stretched across the track. But how is one to make that last hundred yards? The lungs seem almost bursting; the heart is working its hardest; the legs are like lumps of lead, which it seems impossible to lift. And yet a superhuman effort is made; the speed increases; the cheers from the spectators put a thrill of new life into you; the tape is broken and the race is over. It is that last lap and the straight on which we may find it inspiring to meditate.

Growing old is not a time just for sitting back and being comfortable, but a call to think about finishing well. I am not suggesting that we should deceive ourselves into thinking we are young again and full of physical energy. But we want our

heads to be well up; we need the vision of Christ which has inspired us all through life to become even clearer and more precious. We can afford to laugh at the limitations that old age brings upon us in one form or another; but we need to be more and more confident in the love and mercy that follows us ALL the days of our life, calling us in turn to forget ourselves, to seek, to love and to serve. Remember too, that the best is not behind us: 'the best is yet to be'. That is the secret of remaining young in heart — the secret that can make getting old something that is truly beautiful and attractive; we have learnt not to abolish limitations, which are inevitable, but to live above them with our eyes fixed on the end of the race.

And do not forget the cheering spectators. Their enthusiasm means a lot at the end of a hard race. How much more should it mean to us as we near the end of life's race? I always pray for the old in my parish that even now they may be given a dawning consciousness of the glorious fellowship that waits to welcome them, a fellowship which reflects Christ's own love and understanding, and not the standards and limitations of this world.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, conscious of the cloud of spectators by which we are compassed, and looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Facing death

Sooner or later we must all face death. Some people think that is where divine healing fails, because ultimately we must all die. Death and sickness are really two separate subjects. Look at nature for instance: the flower does not die of disease, but life, having served its purpose, is quietly withdrawn.

Death looks very different if we can understand that truth; for ourselves also, life, having served its purpose, is quietly withdrawn. Seen that way, death is not a disaster but an achievement; we are not being destroyed by death but integrated, made whole.

Much of our wrong attitude to death comes from our being deceived by our own eyes. We see the body but not the spirit or the spiritual body; and therefore, perhaps unconsciously, we argue that the physical body is the real, the all important

part of us. We need in times of health to impress upon our own consciousness that we are not physical bodies carrying about, as an extra, a spirit and a spiritual body, but we are always spirits making a physical body. It is a uniform we have to wear, to live in this world and to share in its life. If you have not done so, do learn to think of your physical body as a suit of clothes you are wearing. When a suit of clothes wears out, we put it away; but we have no sense of being finished or put away ourselves. So, too, when our experience of earthly life draws to a close, we put the physical body on one side; and we should equally have no sense of being finished or put away. Five minutes after death we are as fully alive and ourselves as ever we were; and we shall find ourselves in a world that seems as real as does this one; we shall find friendship and love and the call to service awaiting us. St. Paul tells us the sting of death is sin: we shall come face to face with our true selves and see ourselves as Christ sees us; we shall realize our sins as never before; we shall know remorse for the many opportunities we have missed.

Even so let us lay to heart St. John's words (5, 24): 'He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.' The fires of remorse will purify, not destroy us; we shall gradually digest to the full our experience of the earthly life and by the mercy of God learn our lessons and grow.

I am fond of this story of Bishop Maud, who was once President of the Guild. In his last illness we intercessors were daily remembering him with love and earnest prayer. One of my helpers had a dream. She found herself in the spiritual world and an angel talked with her. 'Do tell me,' she said to the angel, 'is the Bishop better, is he going to be spared to us?' The angel said, 'He has been with us already for some days.' His physical death came some days later. I have often wondered if that is a common experience, and is what our Lord meant when He spoke of our not tasting death.

Finally, let us all make an act of faith that God has the right time for each of us to receive our Home-Call — that it is not a matter of luck or chance. And it is Love which decides when

the right time has come for each one of us — a Love which is far greater than human love which only sees some of the facts. If we open our hearts to that Love, we shall by the grace of God find ourselves able to rest in it when our Home-Call comes; and we shall know that He is working not destruction but integration in us, and that we are entering into life.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL

How the message is spreading

FLOATING straws show us which way the stream is running. So it is good to note anything which tells us that the stream of Divine Healing is gathering momentum and growing in volume.

Here are two straws from this quiet country district, whose message is clear and unmistakable. Amy, a girl of 13, had something wrong with her spine; and the visiting specialist of one of our large hospitals wished to graft in some bone. Amy's father believed strongly in Divine Healing, and wished to turn down the doctor's suggestion. I pointed out to him that he could not treat medical advice in such a cavalier fashion, and suggested that he should tell the doctor frankly his own attitude, and ask if he were willing to postpone the operation for three or six months and see if it was then necessary.

I had a similar experience with one of my London helpers many years ago; and at the end of the three months, the doctor said that there was no need for an operation.

Amy's father accepted my advice; and when the specialist arrived, he explained his position. The doctor replied that he believed strongly in Divine Healing himself, and would gladly postpone the operation to see if it was needed.

The other straw is a little girl of five in my parish. Betty had been subject to fits and was very backward. The county doctor came to see her, and then said to the parents that Betty would never be able to go to school, and that medical science could do nothing for her. There is only one thing, he added, which might help her; and that is Divine Healing. She has as a matter of fact had the Laying-on of Hands each week for some months, and has responded wonderfully to it. But the point is that here are two leading medical men frankly admitting their belief in Divine Healing, and one realizing that it could do more than medical science in a particular case. What a wonderful change that fact shows in the attitude of the doctors to that of twenty, or even ten years ago! And what

a challenge it is to Christians, and specially to us clergy, to be up and doing. The attitude of such doctors should give us all a new sense of quietness and confidence in trusting ourselves and those we love to the work of the Divine Physician, Who is the only Healer, whether His work is done through our resting in Him in the Silence or through the hands of the doctor.

Truly the tiny trickle of twenty years ago has become a stream; and the stream is on its way to become a mighty river, and the river a flood, in which we shall find that the Kingdom of God has come in power and blessing in the world. *Laus Deo.*

The love of Jesus

Our love to Jesus is absolutely central to all our spiritual life and experience. Do not let us forget that fact as we turn to Him for healing. Lack of love to Him may well be the fundamental cause of illness.

This problem of love is a difficult one even in human relationships. We see a young engaged couple deeply in love with one another; and a few years later all that glory of love has faded out, and they are just putting up with one another and with life. They started off so well; but they took their love for one another for granted; they felt it unnecessary to show or express that love. They knew each other; they no longer had any surprises for one another; and so life became gradually a burden of many duties, a routine, dull, uninspired, because unlighted by love. We can all think of very different homes, where love has kept its light, where love is freely expressed, where each delights to think of and do things to show love and appreciation. Everyone feels the blessing of such homes, where Christian love has kept its flame clear and bright.

The Portsmouth Brotherhood used to specialize on that problem, urging its members to go back in mind to their courting days, to go home with a little gift, to kiss their wives because they loved them, to do little acts of service to save them trouble. The Portsmouth Brotherhood was deservedly popular in many a Portsmouth home. But let us apply the same thought to our love for Jesus Christ. I expect we can all look back to the times when we learnt to love Christ, when we loved to think

of Him, to share in prayer and praise. But for many, life has gone on with its daily burdens and cares which have fully occupied their minds. They assumed that their love for Christ would take care of itself, and would remain constant and unchanged, and that they need do nothing about it. Love for Jesus Christ and His for them ceased to be wonderful to them, or to be a compelling force, saving them in the hour of temptation.

Surely the Portsmouth Brotherhood has a lesson for us too. We can go back to the highlights of our past spiritual experience: we can recall the love that once rose full and strong in our hearts for Jesus. And meditating on this, we can lift our hearts again to Him in love and thankfulness. We can take steps to let that love shine out in our lives, because it is once again alive in our hearts. We can do little things for the love of Jesus; we can be kind and considerate to people we do not like; we can try to see people and opportunities of service with His eyes. We can deny ourselves for His sake.

Love is not only central to our hearts in seeking to know and love God. But it is equally central to Jesus in His dealing with us and in His releasing of our true selves in us. Jesus says to each one, 'If only you could love Me a little, what could not I do with you and with your Life?' Loving Him might even open the door to the healing of both spirit and body.

The Healing Christ

I expect this page is mainly read by those who are facing problems of health and who wish to learn more about how to help themselves. So I hope you will forgive me if for this month I turn your thoughts to the deeper meaning of Divine Healing. Once we see that, we can each put our hearts into making known Christ's gospel of healing.

I am sure that Jesus did not give so much time to healing because He thought it was supremely important in itself. Rather I would say that He saw the supreme need of everyone realizing that God was not far off, watching our sufferings with cold detachment. Man's greatest need was to know that God was at the very centre of his life, sharing his problems, and that He was not an angry God sending suffering, but a loving

Father whose only part lay in helping us to carry our burdens and to find a way through them. In deed and in truth God is man's best friend.

I believe that was the goal of all our Lord's work of healing; and it should also be consciously ours. Let us realize that that is the greatest spiritual need of the world today; and we shall then see afresh the real meaning and importance of spiritual healing. Without this gospel of healing, we are trying to do Christ's work with only half His gospel: and our past failure in this respect has landed the spiritual life of England and our Empire, in fact the world itself, in our present position. For the key problem of today is how to make God real to men. They see no connection between God and their daily lives. They think mainly of Him as a moral policeman, and so prefer His absence to His presence.

I am sure that that problem disappears at once in any home that has experienced Divine Healing. God and religion become alive and real to them, and through them probably to some of their neighbours. Here is a simple but striking example. I had in my village a black spot — a desperately unhappy home, where the husband beat his wife and was constantly drunk, to the great concern both of neighbours and the police. The wife was taken ill, and the doctor gave no hope of recovery. I went to her and spoke to her about the Divine Healer. Some deep buried spark of faith in her responded, and she was healed. The doctor had told them there was no hope of recovery; so they attributed her recovery to God, and the realization shook that home to the core. God knew them — cared about them and their home. Of their own accord they both came to church to return thanks, and they became regular worshippers. The man gave up his drink and knocking his wife about. He came forward for confirmation, and a few years later became verger of the church he loved so well. Their home became one of the cleanest, happiest and most Christian homes in the village; and everyone knew how this had come about.

Do let us spread the knowledge of the Healing Christ; it is one of the finest ways of helping to solve the great spiritual problem of our day.

The Kingdom of God

There is a vital difference between our knowing the Kingdom of God as a mere mental concept or verbal expression and knowing it as solid fact vibrating with love and power and the spirit of service to the uttermost. Jesus is the Sovereign of that Kingdom and He rules it in the Father's Name and as Himself expressing the mind and will, the power and love of the Father.

The point I would now urge for our thought is a deep and simple one, whether we are needing help for ourselves or seeking to help others through our intercessions. In either case we must get our vision clear that God is not the author of our troubles or those of others for whom we are praying. This needs constant attention on our part; for so easily there slips in the thought that perhaps God is punishing or angry or unwilling to help. God is like a July sun in a cloudless sky; His glory and unchanging love and goodness are such that they must ever remain a source of adoring wonder and ceaseless thanksgiving to us. 'God is light and in Him is *no* darkness at all.' He creates nothing imperfect, He has no private ill-will, no unwillingness to give or to forgive. And how great is His patience with each one of us! I like to think that it has taken God thousands of years to make me what I am, for I know then that He will not give me up as hopeless in a moment of impatience; but it is also good to remember that God is building for eternity and therefore is not in a hurry, but is working out each problem to its perfect solution; He is not concerned with short-cuts which treat physical comfort as the only thing that matters. As these thoughts sink down into our hearts, we find ourselves preparing for the quiet steady work of co-operating with the Master which may accomplish so much for ourselves and for others.

Self-adjustment

Each life has to go through three stages of self-adjustment, first as a baby, then in growing up, and finally in its relation to God and the spiritual world. As the first two require a third of a normal life-time, so the third is bound to take time. We have our Lord's sure promise, 'Ask and ye shall have; seek and

ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.' If we persist in asking, seeking, knocking, we shall find ourselves guided and helped in this adjusting of ourselves to God.

Just as the baby has to adjust to this world by persistently seeking to live in it, so have we to adjust ourselves to God by seeking to live in His spiritual world, the Kingdom of God. Each time we replace fear or wrong by trust in God, we are demonstrating the reality of God and of His ever-present Kingdom. Each time we replace anger against someone by forgiveness and active goodwill, each time we do what we know to be God's Will, instead of indulging our self-will, each time we learn to understand another instead of judging or condemning him, each time we depend upon God's resources instead of looking upon money as an escape from depending upon God, we do in fact demonstrate the reality of God and His ever-present Kingdom; and we are progressively adjusting ourselves to God and His spiritual world.

The body is a wonderful school, through which we may learn this work of adjusting ourselves to God. It gives us in miniature a true vision of His working on the problems of the universe; it reveals to us something of God's difficulties in working out His plan of redemption. Like a farmer, God has His problems, which have to be overcome before the glory of the harvest is assured.

Our first concern in Divine Healing is to create a real belief in the power of God to heal. We have to realize that, while our physical minds and bodies come from our human ancestry and share in the limitations of the fallen state of both man and the material world, yet our spirits and our spirit-bodies are God-created, and share in the perfectness in which alone God can express Himself in all He creates.

The spirit and the spirit-body are the living hand within the glove, which represents the natural body. The natural body is as responsive to the spirit and spirit-body within as the glove is to the hand.

Our natural attitude is to think of the physical body as supremely real and the spiritual body as a shadowy and somewhat unreal indweller. We have to reverse this order in our consciousness and to know that the spirit-body is supremely

real. Without it, the physical body is inert and dead, a glove emptied of the hand.

Resting in God

Divine Healing is not directed by the material mind. That is a truth which we need constantly to remember and which we are all very apt to forget when we are up against some major problem of our own health. Our little grey cells, on which we are so wont to depend in every emergency of daily life, set to work: they must solve the problem; and when finally they turn to God, they still insist on taking charge; they must direct God in His dealing with the problem, they must tell Him exactly how we are to be helped. Divine Healing comes not through our directing God, but in our learning to let go of self and our material wisdom and so rest in God and in His more abundant life and healing wisdom. But to say that Divine Healing is not directed by the material mind does not mean that we are not to learn to think clearly about His way of Healing.

Let me point the way as simply as I can. We think of ourselves as body, mind and spirit, the body on the surface, the mind deeper within, and the spirit and spirit-body as the deepest part of our whole personality. Just because the body is the most obvious part of our being, we are apt to think of it as the most real; but in fact the spirit and the spirit-body are far more real. The physical body is merely a suit of clothes which we wear over our much more real body, the spiritual body. This spiritual body is the one which we take away with us from this world; and as soon as it leaves the body which it interpenetrates from the soles of our feet to the crown of the head, the physical body is deprived of all power; it is merely a suit of clothes which the owner has discarded, and as incapable of independent action.

So our make-up consists of a material body and mind which we inherit from our forefathers. And since we and they are living in a fallen world, neither our physical bodies nor our material minds are perfect; but our spirits and spirit-bodies do not come from our parents — they are God's pure gift to each one of us. What God makes He makes perfect; so our spirits

and spiritual bodies do not share the problems of the material body and mind. They are in living touch with God, indwelt by Him and His perfect life, open to His flooding of them with His more abundant life and vitality. His help thus comes to us through the spirit and the spirit-body, and works outwards to the material mind and body from within. Our need, therefore, is to rest in God, to offer to Him that perfect thing which He created in each one of us, that He may deal with the problem, cleansing, releasing, giving His more abundant life. In practice, it is helpful to think of His life as an electric lamp, which shines out, transfiguring our whole being, as we turn in prayer to rest in God. Our times of praying thus should be filled with thanksgiving and praise, as more and more we place ourselves unreservedly in His keeping. The more we do this the more we shall find that petitions die away on our lips and we know the joy of resting in God and His overshadowing mercy.

The discipline of suffering and the discipline of joy

God has two main ways of stimulating our spiritual life. He does this through the discipline of suffering and through the discipline of joy. This does not mean that God wills and sends suffering, but that suffering is inherent in the fallen world in which we live, and God uses the share of suffering that comes to each of us to stimulate and quicken our spiritual life. In suffering, our entire spiritual being becomes more sensitive and more active, if we can keep ourselves from self-pity.

The truth is that both joy and suffering open up deeper depths of our being and call us to live with fuller life and consciousness. If we are wise, we shall meet each problem of suffering with the words our Lord Himself used, 'Friend, wherefore art thou come?' Suffering, unpleasant as it is, is so often a friend, calling us to look deeper into life and ourselves, and not to rest on the superficial values and comforts of life. But suffering is not necessarily a blessing: we can lose the blessing if we give way to self-pity. Suffering is a screen, which is thrown round our lives, while God calls to us to come closer to Him and learn with Him to see life more truly, tasting more deeply of His resources of help and blessing. In that experience

there can be an unforgettable joy which will enrich our spirits permanently.

It is probably true of all of us that we need to learn the discipline of suffering before we are ready for the discipline of joy. The discipline of joy comes out of a childlike inner walk with Christ. We have learnt to share everything with Him, to look for His blessing and personal touch in all the little things of life. It is there if we have eyes to see it: a kind word from a friend, a friendly act, a surprise event, an unexpected opening or deliverance. The more we learn to give thanks for all things, the more we find there is for which to give thanks. Joy is one of the great marks of the Holy Spirit; eternal joy is the final goal of our pilgrimage on earth; and the simple in heart taste something of it in this life and find it a discipline of the soul no less real than that of suffering.

Reality in prayer

I wonder if you have ever paused to realize the importance of meaning what you say in your prayers. Until we have done so, it is all too likely that we are offering lip service rather than faith in our prayers. Let us be on our guard against this. Perhaps we tell ourselves 'I have said my prayers for so many years; they have not meant very much to me; I have not seen much result; still I will go on saying my prayers, but, of course, I do not expect any real help from them'. If that is your attitude, you will not be disappointed in the extent of your expectation, for very little will happen. 'He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him diligently.' God is more fundamental and powerful than the dictators or the British Empire; He is 'closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet'. Before you pray, realize afresh that in prayer you are coming in touch with reality, with the One Who is Himself the answer to all your needs.

Here are some words from an officer at the Front, which may help us over this question of meaning what we say in prayer. He writes, 'We realize at the Front that the issues of life and death are not in our hands; we take one step and trust the rest. IT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE PEACE OF GOD.' That

man is speaking from the depths of his own heart; it needs no words of mine to picture the fiery hell that he thus prepares himself to face; but even with all that ahead of him, he can say, 'it is the beginning of the peace of God'. Again and again I have heard it said of officers at Dunkirk that they seemed to be inspired and utterly fearless. While our hearts beat in admiration of their heroism, let us remember that even there God's spirit could reach, inspire and help them. Whenever and wherever we touch reality in prayer, the inspiration and peace of God flow in, just as the light pours in if we fold back the shutters. We have to open our hearts to the presence and reality of God, and the sunlight of His presence and power will flow into our hearts and minds.

Ways of approach to God

We each of us have to find the approach to God and His Kingdom that is most vital and helpful. It does not follow that what is very helpful and inspiring to you is so to me, or vice versa.

It may appeal to and help some of our patients if I mention what I have come to find as the most soul-satisfying and inspiring approach to God and His Kingdom.

We all start with God Himself; and yet I wonder how we think of God or seek in any way to visualize Him: a mighty Being dwelling in unapproachable loneliness? A great Light? or a glorified human being? It is so easy by our vision to conceive of God as separate from and completely out of touch with earthly life — and that is fatal. You may remember Basil King's answer to the question: 'How do you think of God?' He had been told nothing could save his sight; and he wondered if there were any possible appeal to God from the verdict of science. 'How do I think of God?' he replied. 'I suppose I think of three thrones above the bright blue sky with God the Father sitting on one, God the Son on a second and God the Holy Spirit on the third.' And then at once he realized how completely out of touch with life was his conception of God. And he persevered in his search until he came at last to think of God as undefeated life. His eyes were saved, and he lived a very full and useful life.

Of course we shall come in our search to our Lord, and try to learn to see God as the Father through His eyes; and that will give a new sense of warmth, nearness and confidence to our vision of God.

But I found myself unable to stop here: what rouses my own faith and confidence with never-failing inspiration is God *and* His Kingdom. I picture to myself a vast universe which the Father has made, where He lives, and where His will is perfectly done, and His power is not one power amongst many powers but has undisputed sway; where His love and wisdom see the way through every difficulty. I see that universe of the Father's not as separate from this world but as behind and within it, so that it is only our fleshly eyes which keep us from seeing and knowing and living ourselves in the Father's universe.

In silent prayer I quietly realize that universe, and know that I belong to it here and now, and that God has given me two very valuable links to assure me of its reality; and these two links are the ministry of angels and the communion of saints. Let us learn to value this gift of the Father; let that human touch come, not as a rival to God, but as a great help to us in feeling really at home with God and His Kingdom, so that we may trust Him more restfully and happily.

Service and Freedom

In one of our best-known collects, we speak of God's service as perfect freedom. As I use those words Sunday by Sunday I often wonder what they are conveying to the minds of those who join in the prayer. The words are a paradox, as Christian truth often is. How can service be freedom? And in any case freedom from what? It is not freedom from sorrow or trouble, from pain or difficulty. Can it be freedom from self? In each of us there are the two selves; the lesser self, with which we were born into this world, and the greater self, the truer deeper self, with which we were born again or from above. The lesser self is very conscious of the limitations of this life, of its changes and chances, of forces and conditions which oppose, of the fallibility of human wisdom and human strength. The greater self belongs to the Heavenly Home, where God is all in all,

where goodness, love, wisdom and power exist in all their fullness and beauty and where evil has been abolished. To attune my soul to that background is to find the fullness of freedom — freedom from fear and worry and from that lesser self with all its limitations. It means that I recognize God not as one power among many but as the one power before whom all other powers, conditions, circumstances give way. The wonder of our Lord's life is that He lived it, moment by moment, wholly and fully in that realization, and so demonstrated the fullness of the freedom and blessedness of such a life. Too often we seek for this blessedness by seeking to surrender one or two sides of our lives into God's keeping, while we want to have our other sides which we prefer to manage for ourselves; and so doing we do not find freedom in God's service. We have deliberately to knock away the props on which we are really resting ourselves, our strength of character, our uprightness of life, our influence, our wisdom, our health or our money, and then the way is open for us to rest in God, to know our lives surrounded at each and every point by His love, His forethought and planning, His provision for our needs. Life then is not a matter of change and chance but of God's unfolding purpose; we are no longer walking aimlessly or uncertainly, but are being led along a definite path to a certain goal. We shall still need to use and develop all our powers of mind and body; but however great these may be, we shall still know they are nothing compared to the overruling mind and blessed purpose of God for our lives.

Life as a pilgrimage

I am sure that death is viewed from the other side very differently from the way in which we view it. Compared with life, as we know it, the bigger life beyond must be very wonderful: so much so that we should surely learn to think of death as an achievement more than as a tragedy.

You will remember how that lovely hymn, 'Brief life is here our portion,' speaks of the bigger life as the morning, and this life as the shadows or night. That is the truly Christian point of view.

Christians today are apt to sit lightly to St. Paul's assurance

that Christ must reign until all enemies are put under His feet; and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. We perhaps wonder if those words are to be taken literally or to be explained away. It is therefore of very real interest to know that scientists today are saying that there are indications that the human body was not meant to die. They look on the physical body as fuel that was meant to be used up gradually by the spiritual body. They would say that by the time that fuel had been used up, the whole body should have been brought under the power of spirit — that man should then pass naturally into the spiritual world as our Lord could have done on the Mount of Transfiguration, without experiencing death as we know it. It would seem that it was the Christ-Consciousness which made this possible in the case of Jesus Christ.

I always say that as we grow older, our motto should be, 'The best is yet to be'. The best is not behind us, in the wonders of youthful joy, enthusiasm or vigour, but lies in really knowing this life as pilgrimage. The pilgrim does not look on the end of his pilgrim journey as a tragedy: his heart has travelled far ahead of him and has rested in his Home long before he gets there. I fancy that what may fill us most with fear is not death, but the pain or suffering that may precede it; but even that will be easier to face if we have made the pilgrim attitude our own, and if we realize that death is not so much the breakdown of all that matters, but the achievement of a released and eternally young spiritual body. We always return thanks when those we are praying for pass on; partly because we see in that outcome God's answer to our prayers, and partly because we see it as achievement rather than disaster.

CHAPTER V

SEASONS

The Christmas message of redemption

THE Christmas season calls to our minds the greatest wonder of the world, a wonder even greater than the self-offering of Love on the Cross, a wonder greater even than the resurrection glory of Easter Day. It is inconceivable to the human mind how it was possible for the Divine Son of God to be incarnated through an earthly mother. We can only accept this mysterious fact and bow our heads and hearts in adoration before the fact of the infant Saviour. In Him we see manhood as the Father had from the beginning planned it: in contrast with Him we see the true measure of our fallen nature and the resulting blunting of all our powers and faculties. But what Christ was as man, that, too, is the goal and measure of our redeemed manhood. He was born in vain unless He has been born in our hearts. What was explicit in Him is potential in us. The quest of the Child of God in our own inner consciousness is the lifelong quest of each Christian life. 'Ask and ye shall have, seek and it shall be given unto you, knock and it shall be opened unto you,' applies above all to this deepest pursuit of our lives, the real 'I' the redeemed manhood, waiting to be released line upon line in us by the action of the Holy Spirit within our souls. Was it not Kipling's Kim who found that by repeatedly asking himself 'Who is Kim?' a Kim deeper and stronger in character was released? It is a question we can with profit face ourselves with again and again: 'Who am I?' Is this body I? No. Am I these emotions of love and hate, of happiness and sorrow? Again, No. Am I these thoughts of cleverness, of worry and fear over the events and circumstances of my daily life? Again, No. My true self is something deeper than all this, the Christlike child of God, who knows not fear, who needs not to worry, who is restful in the certainties of God and His unfolding of the individual life, who is alert and alive but delivered from false ambitions, who is conscious of the never-failing love of God, of His effective resources, of His utter peace and joy. Down the centuries

has sounded again and again that supreme need of man, 'Know thyself'.

How little we have thought about it! And yet it is the heart of the Christmas message: the coming of Christ on that first Christmas Day is His coming to the whole world for its redemption; but He has also to be born in each Christian heart: He waits to reveal to us our true selves as God's children. As we persistently turn our backs on these false selves, our bodies, our emotions, our thought life, so shall we begin to see and know our true selves, the child of God in each of us. And in that vision of the true self lies enlargement and release of freedom and power within, which in their turn can and do bring healing and blessing of every kind.

The Christmas message of love

One of the greatest needs we all have when we are up against life, either in great pain or in facing difficult circumstances, is the realization of the love of God. If we could be sure of God's love, we could get still in ourselves and face our problem with new hope and confidence.

Here is a little story from life, which may help some to find the rock of God's love firm under their feet.

Many years ago now I was visiting a lady who was very ill. She lived in bed in a room with the blinds drawn down to protect her eyes, and she had two nurses. Humanly speaking, it was not expected that she would ever be capable of any other kind of existence. I began to talk to her about the healing Christ and His power to help her; but the point she seemed unable to realize was the love of Christ. How could He love her when she was in such pain and misery? I tried to reassure her, but was conscious that my words were not getting home or having the desired effect. Silently I lifted my heart to God for the needed word or illustration that would mean everything to the patient.

As I did so, my eye fell on a picture of the Madonna and Child by the bedside, and I seized on this as conveying the message she needed — a picture to which her eyes could be turning again and again.

The infant Saviour rests in His mother's arms so happily

because He is surrounded and protected by love. How foolish it would be for the babe to be afraid, to struggle, to distress himself, when those loving arms are round him all the time!

Let us all learn that simple lesson this Christmas time; whether we are sick or well, whether life is easy or full of difficulties and anxieties, that picture is there for each one of us.

When we are afraid or want to struggle and hit out because of our difficulties, our great need is to gaze at some such picture until it speaks to our very souls of the fact that each one of us is surrounded by the love of God. Once we know that truth we can face life and go about our daily duties in a calm spirit of courage and faith.

In the case I am speaking of, the little picture did a wonderful work. The sufferer went from strength to strength and never looked back. For many years now she has been leading a very full and active life; and many a life and many a home has been blessed through her quiet deep faith in the love of God.

Lent: The Transfiguration and the Resurrection

We should seek during Lent to understand more clearly the fact and meaning of the Resurrection. I would suggest as a further field for meditation the transfigured body of Christ before Passion Week and its connection with His resurrection body. The connection of these two bodies has deeply interested me for some time. To the best of my belief I am not guilty of any known heresy when I say that the more I try to understand what the Bible tells us, the more do these two bodies seem to be identical; at least to all intents, if not in literal fact. Standard works on the Resurrection, e.g. Canon Anson's pamphlet, tell us that the whole of Christ's crucified body was taken over into His resurrection body. His crucified body was not miraculously reduced to dust any more than it was stolen, but when Jesus came forth from the tomb, it was with His crucified body brought fully and finally under spiritual law instead of natural law. The appearances during the Great Forty Days show us the powers and action natural to a human body which has been released from natural law and is free to obey spiritual law.

Yet what else is the Transfiguration of our Lord, but the transfiguration of the physical body by the glory of the indwelling spirit of our Lord? It would seem that His physical body was then brought under spiritual law and that the transfiguration might well have been the natural end of His earthly life, and that He might have passed then and there to His Ascension; but for our sakes and for our salvation He turned back from the Heavenly Home awaiting Him and faced the Cross, in order that he might, as the Bible says, taste death for every man. There is surely more in this phrase than we usually realize. Millions had died before, millions have died since; how then did Christ by His death taste death for every man? The answer that I would give is that the Transfiguration showed that the perfect obedience of our Lord's life had completed the work of redemption in His own body. In Him, the human body regained God's original plan for man in which physical death had no part. He need not have died; and He offers to God, to taste the full horror and meaning of death, this one body which in all the human race had by obedience earned the right to release from this world by another door than that of physical death. He tasted the bitterness of death in a special degree because He need not have died; and His whole being must have been sorrowful unto death in a way that ours are not, because we have always expected to die and known that we deserved to die.

If this is true, as I believe it to be, it adds a deep meaning to the events of Holy Week, and especially to our Lord's words, 'This is My Body', 'This is my Blood of the New Testament'. It should surely make clear to us all in all our Communions, but especially in our Easter Communions, that His Body and Blood are given for our bodies no less than for our souls, and that in our Communions Christ is definitely building our resurrection bodies within us, imparting to us something of His own transfigured, crucified, resurrected body. He begins that work during our earthly life, He completes in Paradise the resurrection body, which alone shall enable us to return with Him to this world when it is finally redeemed to God's original plan and purpose.

The other thought that always fills me with deep wonder

and devotion is that the Resurrection shows God's unlimited power over the physical body. The Resurrection is the true basis and content of spiritual healing. True, we cannot at all fully manifest it as yet; but none the less let us hold fast that fact firm in our hearts, and refuse to let it be watered down to something very much less. It will always inspire our Intercession work with reality and a spirit of effective faith.

Easter: The Resurrection Body

We all love Easter Day with its triumphant note of joy and victory. We catch its message of 'life that shall endless be'; but for so very many this joy fades away into something that is vague and uninspiring.

The wireless has taught us many spiritual lessons. For me it has a real Easter message. Let me try and pass it on. We tune in on some particular wave-length and find ourselves in some particular studio, where we can join in with whatever is on the air. We merely have to turn the switch and we are sharing in the life of another studio. But while I am on the first wave-length, I cannot share in the life on the second or any other wave-length, and *vice versa*. Let us realize that life in this world is life on a particular wave-length. As long as I am on this wave-length, life on other wave-lengths is shadowy or unreal to me. The experience we call death is the changing over from one wave-length to another. The value of this thought to me is that it suggests changing over to a world as real and full of life as is this one. I believe this to be so true that many people have difficulty in realizing they are dead. Personally, I expect to be as fully alive five minutes after my death as I am now: I expect to have a body as real as my present one, and to be living in a world that seems every bit as real as this. Is that unreasonable? Surely not. If a universe is necessary to God for Self-expression, if a body is necessary to you or me to enable us to experience life in this world, if a world is equally necessary to us for the expression of life, we shall need a body and a world as much after death as before. That world may well have differing features from this; that body may have added or different powers; but that world and that body constitute a real home, as they do here.

But how does the resurrection body come into any such vision? There I would say we must start by realizing that a resurrection body has to do with this world for us no less than it had to do for Jesus Christ. I think we are apt to forget how closely man and the material world are linked together — so closely in fact that if man is fallen, the world is fallen; if man is redeemed, the world is redeemed. The world itself will ultimately be affected through the full working out of Christ's redemption. I believe our resurrection bodies have to do with that redeemed world, which will have become an extension of Heaven itself; and the key of admission will be the resurrection body which Christ alone can give. I do not see that the resurrection body has or can have any meaning apart from this world. It did not for Christ.

Easter: Restoration to Fellowship

Our hearts are still singing with Easter joy, joy which came in and through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and which should surely speak to our hearts in no uncertain voice of the joy that will spring from the crucifixion of the world itself through which, by the mercy of God, we are being safely carried.

The joy of Easter is that we have been fully restored to fellowship in and with the heavenly home. To as many as received Him, gave He power to become the sons of God. That is a glorious Truth; but let us never forget that the heavenly home is the home of forgiveness: Christ's forgiveness on the Cross calls for a like spirit of forgiveness in us; Heaven would cease to be heaven if we were admitted on any lesser terms. The call of the Cross is more, that under the inspiration of its love we can get rid of our resentments and spites, and so may humbly ask to be received back into the heavenly home, rather than that I have done this or that which I know was wrong and for which I am sorry.

I commend this thought specially to all who are facing problems of health. There is nothing that will more surely hold up Divine Healing than an unforgiving spirit. Yet how common it is! and not least among those who are in earnest about the Christian life. I often think of an old villager, who

was an ardent Christian, but who saw no inconsistency in cutting off his son from all contact with his home, even when the boy's mother died, for some long-standing grievance. I never succeeded in breaking down that obstinate attitude; and he died still glorying in his unforgiving spirit. If we would make ourselves face the fact that we must forgive, and that we cannot take our place in the heavenly home until we have learnt to forgive, I believe most of us would draw near to the Cross and let our Saviour create His spirit of forgiveness to others in us. I know from experience that nothing makes the love and fellowship of Christ so real and conscious to you as forgiving someone who has deeply wronged you and actively trying to do that one good for the love of Christ. How slow we are to believe that to show love instead of anger, dislike or indifference will win a response that will give joy not only to ourselves but to the heart of Christ. Only do not try it as a flash in the pan, ready to go back at once to the old state of grievance; drop it once and for all; and even if you have to wait for a response, persevere: the longer the struggle the greater the joy as love wins the day. Let us remember, too, that it is this unforgiving spirit which is responsible for much of the world's troubles today; each one who learns to forgive is helping to pave the way for a better spirit in the world and the new age that can only dawn as more and more men are inspired with the spirit of forgiveness.

Easter: The Redemption of the Body

The joy of Easter is an individual joy; for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ means the promise and hope to us individually of our own personal resurrection. It is strange how very vague most people are about the resurrection body, largely, I believe, because they have realized so little how closely man and this world are united. If, as Canon Peter Green says, man is a fallen creature, the universe is a fallen universe. If man is essentially spiritual, the universe is spiritual. And I would add that if man is to be redeemed, the world will be redeemed also; if man may experience resurrection, the world also will share in that resurrection. And what is that resurrection of the world but that phrase so often on our Lord's lips, the Kingdom of

God — the world as God originally planned and created it — at long last made manifest by the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Do digest the thought that man and the universe are inseparably connected, and I think you will thus realize that in actual fact our resurrection bodies have no meaning apart from returning to this world. The dead have not ceased to exist; indeed, they have the spiritual bodies which they took with them from this world when they died; but they can only return to this world if they have a resurrection body, or as St. Paul says, if they are 'clothed upon'.

We shall understand better what our resurrection bodies are, if we note that in the case of our Lord, His natural body was transfigured shortly before He suffered and that He could thus have passed into the Heavenly Home without facing death at all. The natural body is fuel, which in a perfectly God-centred life is gradually used up in developing fully the spiritual body within. Our Lord was the only One to live His Life so truly, so fully and fearlessly that this result was achieved in His earthly life. It is this same body which was transfigured and which He offers us in our Communions, and which was crucified and which thereby literally tasted death for every man, for it need not have died. And it was this body which could not be holden by death, and which, in fact, did rise again. In our case, this redemptive work in our bodies is only begun in this life; and it is Jesus Who links Himself to each Christian soul and completes that redemptive work in each soul in the bigger life beyond. That is why He says, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'.

Nothing less than the Christ-consciousness can achieve this full result; but what has been humbly begun here on earth He can continue. And when the time comes and He has completed the work of redemption in us, then we shall find He has worked out in us our resurrection bodies and we can share in the glorious life of the fully redeemed world.

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